

OCTOBER

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MTL Collective

*A Questionnaire on Monuments:
49 Responses*

Monumental Propaganda

*From Institutional Critique to
Institutional Liberation? A Decolonial
Perspective on the Crises of
Contemporary Art*

A Questionnaire on Monuments

From Charlottesville to Cape Town, there have been struggles over monuments and other markers involving histories of racial conflict. How do these charged situations shed light on the ethics of images in civil society today? Speaking generally or with specific examples in mind, please consider any of the following questions: What histories do these public symbols represent, what histories do they obscure, and what models of memory do they imply? How do they do this work, and how might they do it differently? What social and political forces are in play in their erection or dismantling? Should artists, writers, and art historians seek a new intersection of theory and praxis in the social struggles around such monuments and markers? How might these debates relate to the question of who is authorized to work with particular images and archives?

—Leah Dickerman, Hal Foster, David Joselit, and Carrie Lambert-Beatty

CAMERON ROWLAND

Public monuments and memorials to the Confederate States of America occupy government land and facilities in the United States. In Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia, the permanent removal of these monuments is prohibited by state law.⁸ Although the Confederacy was predicated on secession from the US, the maintenance of the Confederate legacy relies on current US governments. The majority of Confederate monuments were constructed during Jim Crow.⁹ These monuments function as indices of the Confederate legacy, its historiography during Jim Crow, and its continued protection.¹⁰ Under the aegis of formal equality, the “public” served by these governments remains conditional.¹¹ This is articulated by governmental commitments to preserve and promote a variety of types of monuments to the Confederacy. Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia announce their governmental operations as coextensive with the legacy of the Confederate Constitution through their continued use of Confederate flags as their contemporary, official state flags. The Confederate Constitution stipulated the maintenance of “the institution of negro slavery,” “the right of property in said slaves,” and the quantification of each slave as three-fifths of a person for the purpose of taxation and congressional representation.¹²

8. Ga. Code Ann. § 50-3-1 (2010); Miss. Code Ann. § 55-15-81 (2013); N.C. Gen. Stat. § 100-2.1 (2015); SC Code § 10-1-163 (2012); Va. Code Ann. § 15.2-1812 (2006).

9. Southern Poverty Law Center, *Whose Heritage? Public Symbols of the Confederacy*, April 2016, https://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/com_whose_heritage.pdf.

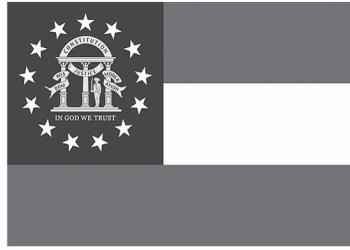
10. Many of these monuments were privately funded by the United Daughters of the Confederacy, founded in 1894. “United Daughters of the Confederacy Historical Markers,” Historical Marker Database, <https://www.hmdb.org/results.asp?SeriesID=259>. “Monuments were central to the UDC’s campaign to vindicate Confederate men, just as they were part of an overall effort to preserve the values still revered by white southerners.” Karen L. Cox, *Dixie’s Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003), p. 49.

11. “As a consequence of emancipation, blacks were incorporated into the narrative of the rights of man and citizen; by virtue of the gift of freedom and wage labor, the formerly enslaved were granted entry into the hallowed halls of humanity, and, at the same time, the unyielding and implacable fabrication of blackness as subordination continued under the aegis of formal equality.” Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 119.

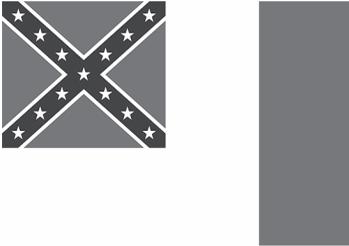
12. James D. Richardson with the permission of Congress, “Permanent Constitution,” in *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Confederacy Including the Diplomatic Correspondence 1861–1865*, (Nashville: United States Publishing Company, 1905), pp. 51, 50, 37.



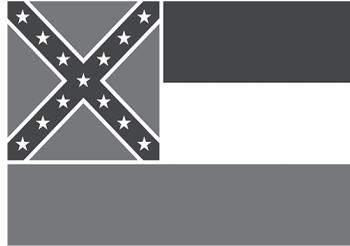
First Confederate National Flag (1861 - 1863)



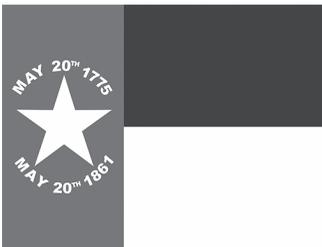
Georgia State Flag (2003 - present)



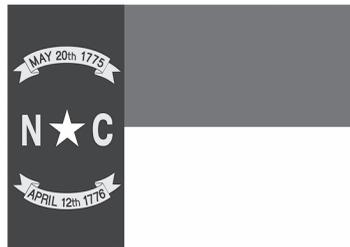
Third Confederate National Flag (1865)



Mississippi State Flag (1894 - present)



North Carolina Confederate State Flag (1861 - 1865)



North Carolina State Flag (1885 - present)



South Carolina Confederate State Flag (1861 - 1865)



South Carolina State Flag (1865 - present)



Virginia Confederate State Flag (1861 - 1865)



Virginia State Flag (1865 - present)